

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 148739

FOLLOWING TEL SENT ACTION SECSTATE FROM GRENADA JUNE 20:

QUOTE C O N F I D E N T I A L GRENADA 0081

DEPT PLEASE PASS AMREP

FOR THE SECRETARY, ARA-AMB. TODMAN

FROM USDEL OASGA

USOAS DEL 59

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PORG, OAS, SHUM
SUBJ: HUMAN RIGHTS AT OASGA

1. SUMMARY: SEVENTH OAS GENERAL ASSEMBLY WAS BATTLEGROUND FOR CARTER ADMINISTRATION'S HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY IN THIS HEMISPHERE. FACT THAT PRESENT OF ASSEMBLY'S ENEGRIES AND ALMOST ALL ITS TIME SPENT ON THIS SENSITIVE ISSUE, USUALLY SCRUPULOUSLY AVOIDED OR TREATED WITH KID GLOVES IN THE OAS, WAS TRIUMPH FOR OUR INSISTENCE THAT INTER-AMERICAN SYSTEM MUST FOCUS ON DEFENSE OF HUMAN RIGHTS IF CONFIDENTIAL

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BILATERAL BREAKDOWN IS TO BE AVOIDED. BATTLELINES WERE DRAWN HERE EARLY. US, VENEZUELA, COSTA RICA, PANAMA PLUS THREE ENGLISH-SPEAKING CARIBBEAN STATES FORMED CORE OF DEMOCRATIC GROUP THAT REFUSED TO COMPROMISE ON FRANK LANGUAGE DENOUNCING OFFENSES AND CALLING FOR FULL SUPPORT OF THE INTER-AMERICAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION. BRAZIL, ARGENTINA, CHILE, PARAGUAY, GUATEMALA, EL SALVADOR LINED UP IN OPPOSITE CAMP, WITH URUGUAY FAR OUT IN FRONT AS DEMOGOGIC SPOKESMAN AND HARSH CRITIC OF US "POLITICIZATION" OF IAHR. COLOMBIAN FONMIN LIEVANO, IN FACT A DEFENDER

OF HUMAN RIGHTS, LEFT A TIMEBOMB BEHIND IN FORM OF HIS
CONFUSED RESOLUTION, LUMPING LOME-CONVENTION ECONOMICS
WITH CRITICISM (BARELY VEILED) OF US AND (VERY CLEAR)
OF IAHC.

2. DEMOCRATIC GROUP LABORED UNDER BURDEN OF LIEVANO
RESOLUTION OVER LAST TEN DAYS, ATTEMPTING TO SUBSTITUTE
ITS OWN RESOLUTION CONTAINING STRONG LANGUAGE IN SUPPORT
OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND IAHC WHILE DEFEATING ARGENTINA'S
DRAFT THAT ADDED TERRORISM TO HUMAN RIGHTS BRIEF AND CALLED
FOR "REFORM" OF IAHC TO MEET CHALLENGE OF TERRORISM.
US, VENEZUELA, COSTA RICA, ET. AL. REFUSED TO COMPROMISE
ON PRINCIPLE BY MELDING LANGUAGE OF SOUTHERN CONE
RESOLUTION WITH OURS, PREFERRING DEFEAT OF JOINT RESOLUTION
TO MEANINGLESS COMPROMISE. MEXICO BLURRED ISSUE SOME-
WHAT BY AMENDING COLOMBIA'S RESOLUTION IN WAYS THAT MADE
IT ALL BUT IRRESISTIBLE TO THIRD WORLD LATIN/CARIBBEAN
STATES, WHICH THEN VOTED FOR LIEVANO DRAFT OVERWHELMINGLY.
ARGENTINA'S RESOLUTION WAS SOUNDLY DEFEATED, AS WAS CHILE'S
ATTEMPT TO ADD TERRORISM/REFORM IAHC TO JOINT RESOLUTION.
IN THE END, BY RELATIVELY TIGHT VOTE, ONE MORE THAN
MAJORITY NEEDED, RESOLUTION OF DEMOCRATIC BLOC PASSED,
WITH KEY ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FROM PERU, ECUADOR AND HAITI. END
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SUMMARY.

2. ANALYSIS AND COMMENT: THE ISSUE OF HUMAN RIGHTS
DOMINATED THIS ASSEMBLY FROM THE OPENING SPEECH TO THE
LAST REBUTTAL. THE ONLY OTHER POLITICAL DEBATE OF ANY
IMPORTANCE - BELIZE - WAS INTRODUCED INTO THE DELIBERATIONS
AS ANOTHER HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE.

3. OUR RESOLUTION CARRIED BY FOURTEEN VOTES, NONE AGAINST
AND EIGHT ABSTENTIONS. THIS WAS AN IMPORTANT VICTORY BUT
MORE SIGNIFICANTLY, WE PUT TOGETHER A RESOLUTION THAT CONTAINED
NO CONCESSIONS TO THOSE GOVERNMENTS WHICH OFFEND AGAINST
HUMAN RIGHTS. OUR RESOLUTION INSISTED ON COOPERATION WITH
THE INTER-AMERICAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION (IAHC),
REQUIRED PROTECTION FOR PERSONS WHO COMPLAIN ABOUT ABUSES
AND TESTIFY AGAINST THEIR GOVERNMENTS (A DIRECT CRITICISM OF
CHILE) AND TOOK A STEP TOWARDS OUR OBJECTIVE OF FREE VISITS
BY IAHC IN THAT IT REQUIRED THE COMMISSION TO ORGANIZE
CONSULTATIONS WITH GOVERNMENTS AND "APPROPRIATE INSTITU-
TIONS AND RESPONSIBLE ORGANIZATIONS". (AN IMPORTANT POINT
AS IT IMPLIES DIRECT CONTACT IN COUNTRY WITH GROUPS NOT CON-
NECTED TO THE GOVERNMENT).

4. IT WOULD HAVE BEEN THE EASIEST OF TASKS TO ACHIEVE A
UNANIMOUS RESOLUTION. WE HAD ONLY TO ACCEPT COMPROMISE
LANGUAGE TAKEN FROM THE ARGENTINE AND COLOMBIAN RESOLUTIONS
A) ADDRESSING HUMAN RIGHTS IN CONTEXT OF TERRORISM

AND, B) ACCEPTING THESIS THAT IAHRC NEEDS RESTRUCTURING TO BECOME FULLY EFFECTIVE.

5. FOLLOWING THE SECRETARY'S LEAD, WE REJECTED THIS COURSE AND INSISTED THAT THE STATE'S DEFENSE AND WELL-BEING MUST NOT BE ACHIEVED BY SUPPRESSION OF DISSENT OR OFFICIALLY SANCTIONED VIOLENCE AND THAT NOT TO SUPPORT THE IAHRC IS A "GRAVE BREACH OF INTER-AMERICAN COOPERATION AND CAN ONLY INTRODUCE RANCOR INTO OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS".
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6. THE US WORKED IN CONCERT WITH VENEZUELA AND JAMAICA TO DRAW CLEAR AND SHARP BATTLE LINES. WE AGREED THAT WE WOULD MAKE NO CONCESSIONS ON MATTERS OF PRINCIPLE AND WOULD PREFER TO REMAIN A MINORITY RATHER THAN COMPROMISE ON OUR ORIGINAL POSITIONS.

7. AS A RESULT OF EXTENSIVE CORRIDOR CONSULTATIONS, WE PUT TOGETHER A HARD CORE OF SUPPORT FROM SEVEN OTHER DELEGATIONS, MEXICO, COSTA RICA, PERU, THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, TRINIDAD, BARBADOS AND SURINAM, MAKING A TOTAL OF ELEVEN. WITH TIMELY AND EFFECTIVE APPROACHES BY OUR AMBASSADORS, WE WERE ABLE TO ADD ECUADOR, PANAMA AND HAITI TO OUR LIST. EMBASSY LA PAZ ALSO MADE AN EFFECTIVE DEMARCHE BUT THE BOLIVIAN AMBASSADOR DEPARTED BEFORE THE FINAL VOTE.

8. WE SUCCEEDED HERE IN OBTAINING U COMMITMENT FROM HONDURAS BUT WHEN THE VOTE WAS TAKEN HE WAS ABSENT. JAMAICA PUT PRESSURE ON GRENADA AND THAT GAVE US THE EXTRA SAFETY MARGIN WE REQUIRED.

9. OUR TASK WAS COMPLICATED BY THE ROLE COLOMBIA PLAYED. FOREIGN MINISTER LIEVANO TABLED A MISCHIEVOUS RESOLUTION WHICH HAD SOMETHING IN IT FOR EVERYONE. IT WAS A GIFT TO THE SOUTHERN CONE AND THEY MADE THE MOST OF IT. BECAUSE COLOMBIA TABLED ITS RESOLUTION FIRST, IT TOOK ABSOLUTE PRIORITY AND NO AMOUNT OF IMAGINATIVE PARLIAMENTARY MANEUVER ON OUR PART COULD CHANGE THAT FACT. MEXICO THEN WENT INTO ITS FAMOUS TWO-STEP AND AMENDED THE RESOLUTION TO ELIMINATE ITS WORST FEATURES. THIS RESULTED IN A COMPROMISE RESOLUTION WITH ALMOST NO OPERATIVE PARAGRAPH. IT WAS THEREFORE DIFFICULT FOR THE MAJORITY TO OPPOSE. ONLY THE HARD CORE, THE US, VENEZUELA, PANAMA AND JAMAICA
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ABSTAINED.

10. THE RESOLUTION PROPOSED BY ARGENTINA IMPLICITLY JUSTIFIED GOVERNMENT RESORT TO COUNTER-TERRORISM TO PROTECT PUBLIC ORDER. WE REFUSED THE TRAP OFFERED REPEATEDLY BY ARGENTINA TO MELD

THE BEST ELEMENTS OF ALL RESOLUTIONS. INSTEAD, WE LED A SUCCESSFUL FIGHT TO DEFEAT THE ARGENTINE RESOLUTION AND TO EXCLUDE ADDITION OF ITS MAIN FEATURES AS CHILEAN AMENDMENTS TO UR DRAFT. FOUR GOVERNMENTS VOTED AGAINST ARGENTINA'S RESOLUTION (US, PANAMA, VENEZUELA AND JAMAICA). IN THE OAS, WHERE ABSTENTIONS SERVE AS POLITE NEGATIVES, THIS IS THE EQUIVALENT OF SAYING NOT ONLY "NO" BUT "HELL, NO". IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE WHICH DELEGATIONS SUPPORTED ARGENTINA'S RESOLUTION. THEY ARE IN EFFECT TELLING US FLATLY THAT THEY COMPLETELY DISAGREE WITH US ON HUMAN RIGHTS: GUATEMALA, EL SALVADOR, ARGENTINA, URUGUAY, CHILE AND BRAZIL. WE EXCEPT COLOMBIA AND HAITI (WHICH ALSO VOTED IN FAVOR) FROM THIS CLASSIFICATION BECAUSE OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES. COLOMBIA HAD TO DEAL WITH THE DEVIL TO ESCAPE FROM THE BOX IN WHICH THE FOREIGN MINISTER'S RESOLUTION PLACED THEM. THE HAITIANS, AFTER AMB. ISHAM'S DEMARCHE, OBVIOUSLY DECIDED THAT THE EASIEST WAY OUT WAS TO VOTE YES ON EVERYTHING THAT CAME UP. NICARUGUA WAS ABSENT BUT WOULD HAVE VOTED FOR THE RESOLUTION. VOLIVIA AND HONDURAS WERE ALSO ABSENT, PROBABLY BECAUSE THEY ARE CONFUSED AND DO NOT KNOW WHAT TO DO. VOTING ONE WAY OR ANOTHER WAS BOUND TO OFFEND SOMEONE.

11. CHILE HAD MUSTERED BETWEEN 16 AND 18 VOTES TO HEAD OFF THE VENEZUELAN RESOLUTION CALLING FOR ANOTHER SPECIAL REPORT ON CHILE FOR 1978, THE FOURTH IN A SERIES. WITHOUT REPEATING THE ARGUMENTS CONTAINED IN OUR TELEGRAM (GRENADA 0038 OF JUNE 17), WE ARE CONVINCED WE TOOK THE SOUNDEST COURSE. CHILE GAVE UP A CERTAIN AND OVERWHELMING PARLIAMENTARY VICTORY IN EXCHANGE FOR AN AGREEMENT THAT THE US WOULD ACCEPT FACT CHILE IS NOT UNIQUELY DIFFERENT FROM OTHER HUMAN
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RIGHTS OFFENDERS IN THE OAS.

12. THIS ASSEMBLY SERVED AS A CATALYST FOR MANY GOVERNMENTS TO DEVELOP THEIR POSITIONS ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN ORDER TO TAKE PUBLIC STAND. SOME WELCHED. GUATEMALA, EL SALVADOR, HONDURAS, AND NICARAGUA WERE TERRIBLE. THEY RETREATED INTO INTRANSIGENCE AND SULLEN SILENCE, RATHER THAN FACE TOUGH ISSUES OR TRY TO UNDERSTAND THEM. OUR AMBASSADORS IN THESE COUNTRIES WILL HAVE A DIFFICULT TASK OF EDUCATION OVER THE NEXT FEW YEARS IF THEIR HOST GOVERNMENTS ARE TO BE BROUGHT AROUND. BUT THEY CAN BE BROUGHT AROUND, THROUGH PERSISTENT AND PATIENT DIALOGUE IN LANGUAGE THEY CAN UNDERSTAND.

13. BECAUSE OF PROGRESS IN THE CANAL NEGOTIATIONS AND PANAMA'S DESIRE TO BE ASSOCIATED WITH VENEZUELA AND THE CARIBBEAN, AMB. PITTY PLAYED AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE PROGRESS ON HUMAN RIGHTS ACHIEVED HERE. BARRING A BREAK-DOWN IN THE NEGOTIATIONS, WE JUDGE THAT ONE OF THE RESULTS

OF THIS GA AND OF OUR EMBASSY'S CONVERSATIONS WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTER IS TO PLACE PANAMA SQUARELY IN THE HUMAN RIGHTS CAMP.

14. IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO OVEREMPHASIZE THE ROLE OF THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING CARIBBEAN STATES. THEY ARE OUTSIDERS NO MORE IN THE INTER-AMERICAN SYSTEM. THEY NOW UNDERSTAND THE OAS AND HAVE MASTERED ITS BYZANTINE PROCEDURES COMPLETELY. WITH THEIR BRITISH HERITAGE AND TRADITION OF COMMON LAW, THEY ARE THOROUGHLY AT HOME WITH THE ISSUE OF RIGHTS OF MAN AND CITIZEN VERSUS THE STATE. FEW OF THE NATIONS CAN STAND UP TO THEIR ELOQUENCE AND LOGIC.

15. PERU AND ECUADOR ARE OBVIOUSLY WELL ALONG IN PROCESS
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OF DEVELOPING AN AWARENESS OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND ADOPTING AN INTELLIGENT, SENSIBLE, HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY. THEY SUPPORT THE US BUT ARE VISIBLY CONCERNED ABOUT OUR ACTIVISM AND WORRIED LEST THE LINK BETWEEN HUMAN RIGHTS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BE BROKEN.

16. OF ALL THE SOUTHERN CONE COUNTRIES, URUGUAY WAS THE WORST. INEPT, INSENSITIVE AND WITH LITTLE OR NO UNDERSTANDING OF THE SUBTLETIES OF THE ISSUES, THEY TALKED INTERMINABLY AND SAID NOTHING.

17. THE CHILEANS HERE HAD ONE PURPOSE: TO PROVE CHILE WAS NO WORSE THAN OTHERS. IN THIS THEY SUCCEEDED. THE CHILEAN DELEGATION SPOKE LITTLE, STATED ITS POSITION CALMLY AND WENT TO GREAT LENGTHS TO APPEAR TO BE CONSTRUCTIVE.

18. PARAGUAY'S FOREIGN MINISTER STAYED THROUGH THE ENTIRE ASSEMBLY. HE HAD A FIRST CLASS DELEGATION WHICH, ALTHOUGH IT SPOKE LITTLE, GAVE US THE IMPRESSION THAT MINISTER NOGUES AND HIS TOP ADVISORS WERE THERE TO GATHER MATERIAL FOR FIXING THEIR FUTURE COURSE OF ISSUE THAT MAY BECOME ALL IMPORTANT TO PARAGUAY, CAUGHT BETWEEN SOUTHERN CONE COUNTRIES AND MORE DEMOCRATIC STATES TO THE NORTH.

19. THE CAPABLE ARGENTINE DELEGATION WAS FRUSTRATED IN ITS MAIN OBJECTIVES: TO PORTRAY ARGENTINA AS A BELEAGUERED COUNTRY AND THEMSELVES AS REASONABLE MEN. THE ARGENTINE SPOKESMAN, MINISTER ARLIA, WAS SO OBNOXIOUS--CONDESCENDING, VAGUE, UNPLEASANT--THAT THE ARGENTINE DELEGATION SPOKE OPENLY TO US ABOUT THE "PRIMITIVE" REPRESENTING THEM.

20. TO WIND UP WITH THE MOST IMPORTANT COUNTRY, BRIZIL ARRIVED AT THIS CONFERENCE WITH A DELEGATION OF THIRTY-TWO OFFICERS, INCLUDING THE FOREIGN MINISTER, SILVEIRA, AND TWO OF HIS DEPUTIES. (VENEZUELA AND MEXICO HAD FIFTEEN

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OFFICERS EACH WHILE THE US AND ARGENTINA HAD DELEGATIONS OF THIRTEEN). THE BRAZILIANS SPOKE LITTLE BUT PUT HEAVY AND CONSTANT PRESSURE ON OTHER DELEGATIONS TO OPPOSE THE US AND TO SUPPORT BOTH THE ARGENTINE AND COLOMBIAN RESOLUTIONS. WE SUSPECT THAT BRAZIL PLAYED A ROLE BEFORE AS WELL AS DURING THE CONFERENCE IN MANEUVERING COLOMBIA INTO A POSITION WHERE NEITHER ITS FOREIGN MINISTER NOR ITS OAS AMBASSADOR NATURALLY BELONGED.

21. AS DIPLOMATS, THE BRAZILIAN DELEGATES WERE FIRST CLASS, SKILLED AND DISCREET, ALWAYS FRIENDLY TOWARDS US IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE EXCHANGES BUT SEVERAL DELEGATIONS (BOLIVIA, PARAGUAY AND THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC) TOLD US IN CONFIDENCE ABOUT THE PRESSURES BRAZIL WAS APPLYING. FOR EXAMPLE FONMIN SILVEIRA FLEW HERE IN A BRAZILIAN AIR FORCE PLANE AND PICKED UP THE ENTIRE PARAGUAY DELEGATION IN ASUNCION. HE SPENT BETTER PART OF THE TRIP TO GRENADA PERSUADING THE PARAGUAYAN FONMIN NOT TO ACCEPT A VISIT FROM THE IAHR.

22. IN REVIEWING THIS MESSAGE, WE FIND A GLARING OMISSION: THE VITAL CONTRIBUTION OF THE DELEGATION OF THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC. THANKS IN NO SMALL PART TO THE COOPERATION OF OUR EMBASSY IN SANTO DOMINGO, WE HAD A SOLID ALLY WHO STOOD WITH US ALL THE WAY, EVEN TO THE EXTENT OF REFUSING TO SUPPORT THE "IRRESISTIBLE" COLOMBIAN RESOLUTION. ANOTHER HAPPY RESULT OF THIS OASGA IS THAT THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC'S POSITION HAS CRYSTALLIZED AND FOREIGN MINISTER JIMENEZ, WHO STAYED THROUGH MUCH OF THE CONFERENCE, WAS OBVIOUSLY COMFORTABLE REPRESENTING A COUNTRY THAT FOUND ITS OWN WAY OUT OF A LONG ERA OF TROUBLES AND IS TAKING THE CONSTITUTIONAL PATH WITHOUT RECOURSE TO GOVERNMENTAL BRUTALITY.

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23 WE ARE PLEASED WITH OUR DELEGATION'S ROLE BUT WE ARE EVEN MORE PLEASED THAT A LATIN AMERICAN NATION, VENEZUELA, TOOK ON HUMAN RIGHTS AT THIS OASGA. ABLY ASSISTED BY COSTA RICA'S AMBASSADOR SILVA, FONMIN ESCOVAR AND OAS AMBASSADOR MACHIN SPOKE WITH ELOQUENCE AND CONVICTION OF VENEZUELA'S UNSWERING COMMITMENT TO DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES. VENEZUELA OFFENDED SOME BY NAMING NAMES, AS WE DID NOT. BUT THIS WELL-CONSIDERED OFFENSIVE BY VENEZUELA WILL EVENTUALLY HAVE A GOOD EFFECT. SEVERAL DELEGATIONS HAVE ADVISED THEIR GOVERNMENTS TO CLEAN UP THEIR ACT OR FALL UNDER VENEZUELA'S LASH IN THE FUTURE.

24. WE CLOSE WITH THE OBSERVATION THAT THE PRESIDENT'S

RECENT SPEECH TO THE OAS, HIS SIGNING OF THE SAN JOSE PACT, MRS. CARTER'S TRIP TO LATIN AMERICAN AND SECRETARY VANCE'S MEETINGS WITH SIXTEEN FOREIGN MINISTERS AT THE OASGA HAVE ALL WORKED TOGETHER TO FORGE NEW BONDS AND ESTABLISH A NEW RELATIONSHIP WITH LATIN AMERICA.

25. FINALLY, WE CAN WORK SUCCESSFULLY THROUGH THE OAS ONLY IF WE ARE WILLING TO EXPEND THE TIME, ENERGY, ATTENTION AND POLITICAL CAPITAL THAT HAVE BEEN DEVOTED TO THIS ENDEAVOR. THE RESULTS MAY NOT BE DRAMATIC, IN TERMS OF US POLITICAL HEADLINES, BUT IT WAS WELL COVERED IN LATIN AMERICA AND EVERY FOREIGN MINISTER HERE WENT AWAY WITH THE CONVICTION THAT THE US CARES DEEPLY ABOUT ITS RELATIONS WITH THIS HEMISPHERE AND THAT PROGRESS ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE FUNDAMENTAL BASIS OF INTER-AMERICAN COOPERATION. MCGEE UNQUOTE VANCE

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